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F I N I S.







7. 8. 29. 6.  
TWO  
SERMONS

Preached at  
**Two Publick Assizes**  
For the County of  
**SUFFOLK,**  
In the Sheriffalty  
Of *Will. Soame* of *Hawleigh*  
in *Suffolk* Esq;.

By *will. Smyth* D. D. Pr. *Nor.*  
and Vic. of *Mendlesham* in  
*Suffolk.*

L O N D O N,  
Printed by *Andr. Clark* for *Walter Ket-*  
*tilby* at the *Bishops-head* in *St. Pauls*  
Church-yard. 1674.


2301:67

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FOR  
Sir *WILLIAM SOAME*,  
Late the Honourable  
HIGH SHERIFF  
Of the County of  
*S U F F O L K.*

SIR,

 Hen by my Transcription  
of these Papers, I had  
a more perfect Survey  
of them, I found them  
so much inferiour to your earnest  
desires for, and dear purchase of  
A 2            them,

## The Epistle

*them, that I judged nothing, but your profest respect to my person, and a kind habituated Acquaintance, could seduce your Opinion to so undeserved an estimation of them. Sir, when you heard them, your tenderness of my Reputation, before so great an Assembly, sate at Stern to govern your apprehension; and the gay circumstances of your solemnity, allayed the severity of your observation. But now, Sir, they are under your eye, and your mind at leisure and freedom to exercise an impartial judgment upon them, I fear they may sink in your Opinion, like an artificial Beauty at a nearer in-*

## Dedicatory.

*inspeccion. The hearing of a Sermon, is like a standing to view a transient Cavalcade, which if it stood still, and every part of it were offered to a steady observation, how would the Glory of it be lessened (in a wise mans opinion) to little more, then the Gaiety of some idle Pageantry? But, Sir, why do I prognosticate so much evil to myself, when the Stars of my fate, are in the hands of so great an ingenuity? I will not chuse to suspect, where I have so much cause not to be jealous. For, Sir, I rest in this satisfaction to myself, that if these Papers will not answer your expectation, yet my truth in perfor-*

## The Epistle

ming my promise, and my duty in obeying your command, will be approvable, and acceptable to you: and that shall be reputed with me, a sufficient compensation for all the inconveniences I have objected against myself. And, Sir, for the regard you have shewn me, and the honour you have done me, in your so friendly a choice of me (in the midst of so many excellent persons, that better deserved your favour) to be interested in your so honourable an employment, let it be adjudged a perpetual obligation upon me to perform all possible Service to your Self and Family, that  
ever

Dedicatory.

*ever can come in the Capacity of*

Honoured Sir,

Your late Chaplain

but unchangeable

Servant and Friend

*William Smyth.*

*Mendlesham*

*Jan. 24.*

*1673.*



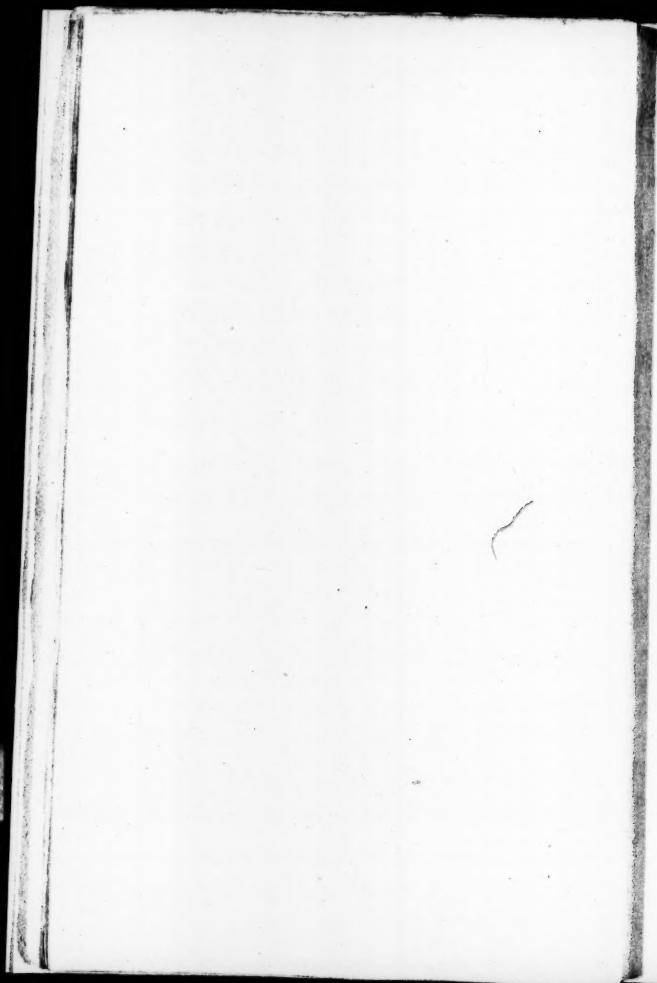


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THE  
FIRST SERMON

Preached at  
BURY St. EDMUND

At the  
Publick Assizes,  
Feb. 27. MDCLXXII.



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# S E R M. I.

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1 Pet. 2. 21.

*Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.*

**Y**OU may presume, at the hearing of these words, that I designedly wave all temptations of intermeddling with the concerns of Publick Affairs, or entertaining your attentions with reflections upon any State-emergencies. I would not be willingly exemplarily

rily guilty, of tempting you from that excellent order of *Your studying to be quiet, and of doing your own business.*

But as I would not move in a circumference larger then my Office; so I would not willingly be confined to one narrower, that is, I would not spend (I may say, lose) an hour in instructing them in their duty, who understand it better then my self; much less in quarrelling the miscarriages of of the Laws proceedings, some of which will be always unavoidable upon the best management; and in others we may easily miss our mark for want of a right understanding the Nature of those Affairs. Either of which have been seldom done without many unkind reflections upon other mens Callings and Imployments.

Nevertheless, I solemnly design

sign to do you the best good I can; and that not without a particular respect to your present Affairs. But I shall endeavour it from the best expedient of Instruction that the mind of Man is capable to receive; that is, from the influence which Christianity in general, may and must have upon all the actions of men; infallibly conducting them to the two great ends of *Nature* and *Religion*, that is, *In all things, and to all men, to do that's right and Good.*

Nor is there any method wherein I may place Christianity more in your view in so short a time, or express it with so much advantage for the obtaining of both those ends, as by representing it in the blessed Pattern of our Saviours Life and Actions. Especially if we can believe ourselves obliged (according to my Text)

as

as he hath left us *an example, to follow his steps.*

In the management of which Doctrine of following Christ as an example, though the *Socinians* do affirm little other use or benefit to have been designed in all that he did and suffered, but to be a pattern, by which we should govern our lives and actions, and in that sense to redeem us from all iniquity: Making his death neither expiatory of the guilt, nor meritorious of the pardon of it; much less satisfactory to the Justice of God in order to either. Yet ought the Doctrine to be considered in its due place, and carefully prest, as the most successful expedient to secure and promote the universal practice of all Gospel-holiness in the lives of men. *Learn of me*, saith Christ, *Matth.* 11. 29. that is, study to be instructed

cted by my personal Vertues and Practices, as well as be conducted by my Laws and Precepts; which will appear to have greater force and lustre from my exemplification of them. And St. *Paul* obligeth his *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 11.1. *to be followers of him, as he was of Christ.* To whose Image and Pattern we were predestinated, saith the same Apostle, *Rom.* 8.29. *to be made conformable; that is, Christ left us an example to follow his steps.*

In the handling which words, according to my proposed design, I think all Expositors will afford me a liberty to interpret that they intend, not only an imitation of him in his sufferings, but much more in the manner of his submission to them; that is, in all those Graces, Vertues, and imitable parts of *holy life*, that attended his suffering state, and were designedly

signedly practised by him for our *perpetual imitation*. All which I shall endeavour to represent in several the most considerable parts of his excellent example, such as will be most requisite for us to follow in order to our great *Salvation*.

1. The first step of them was his *Eminent and Extensive Love*. A Love that had no narrow limitation of a private concern, like the new admired prudential love and *Leviathan* kindness of the World, designed only to center in self interest. Nor like the love of Factions, knit together in combined strengths for mischief; which always proves like the kindness of Wolves, (to whom our Saviour compares them, *Mat.* 7. 15.) who when they have assisted one another in united Companies to destroy the innocent Flocks,



Flocks, do in the end exercise their ravenous nature in devouring one another.

But our dear Saviours love, as it was wholly resigned up to, and terminated upon the good of all men, so it admitted no restraint, refused no attempt from the greatest disobligations of them that needed it, even to the loss of life it self; which he suffered not only for them that were most unworthy in themselves, *the ungodly*. But as they were most unworthy to him, even while they were his Enemies, as *S. Paul (Rom. 5.)* discourses the commendation of his love.

This kind of love, and in such proportions as our abridged capacity can advance it, our Saviour intended for our necessary imitation. And so he declared his will, and instituted his command,

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That

*That ye love one another, as I have loved you, Joh. 13. 34. And by this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.*

And this Copy of Christs love was so eminently and universally transcribed, by the Primitive Christians, that *Tertullian* observes, that it became Proverbial even among their enemies, *To love like Christians.*

But then we must further understand from Christs example, that our greatest Enemies, even upon the strongest provocations to the contrary, are to be admitted to all the measures of that holy love, that is, to all acts of strict justice, and mercy, of forgiveness, and blessings, and that upon the peril of our souls, if we live habitually in the breach of any part of that love.

But O unhappy face of Christianity

stianity now in the World ! How do men make temptations from little differences in Opinion, nice distinctions of Parties, some small affronts, or casual mistakes, to study spite, and mischief, ill turns, and unkind usages, secret hatreds, and open hostilities; to the oppression and ruine one of another.

Can these things be justified by the example of Christ? Can these be the proper effects of that Profession where love should be predominant? Do we not know that he that loveth not his Brother, 1 *Job.* 3. 10. that is, every man, and in the measures I have mentioned, is in the same state of danger towards God, as he that doth not Righteousness; that is, universally and grossly wicked. The sum is, he that refuseth the love of Christ for an example to

imitate, cannot without presumption rely upon the benefit of the same love for his souls blessing and salvation.

2. The second part and step of Christs example in his suffering state, which we are to imitate, was his professed humility; then which nothing could be greater, because then himself nothing could be made less, nor then his own any condescension lower.

There is nothing recorded of him from first to last, except his transfiguration (the glory of which was very transient and private) but what speak the lowest abasement and depressed humility. His birth, fortune, society, and quality, the price of his Presentation in the Temple, and his value at his death, and the manner of his sufferings, do all declare that he chose the bottom

some of contempt, and poverty. Therefore St. Paul was at a stand how to express it, and because he thought ἐταπείνωσεν, *Phil. 3. 8.* he *humbled himself*, was too little, he adds ἐκένωσε, *he emptied himself to nothing*, to exemplifie his humility.

This is the pattern, which he gave his Disciples for their imitation; and so he commands, *Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart, Mat. 11. 29.* And what he said upon one particular instance, of his **Condescension**, *Washing his Disciples feet*, may be supposed to be obliging to all other parts of his Humility; *I have given you an example to do as I have done, Joh. 13. 15.*

O let us be studious to transcribe this blessed Copy, and adorn our Profession, by imitating his holy example. Let us put on

humbleness of mind, let it be prevalent over all our faculties within us; Let us be cloathed with humility in our whole conversation without us, as the two great Apostles *St. Paul* and *St. Peter* advise, *Col. 3. 10. 1 Pet. 5. 5.* that is, let us be humble in our thoughts, and private communions with our minds; let us be humble in our discourses, carriage, and conversation with others; let us be humble in all our disputes with all those that differ, and in all our reproofs of all those that offend God or us; let us condescend to the capacities of those whom we are to instruct, and to the infirmities of them with whom we live and converse; let us stoop to the meanest offices of doing good, and serving God, in doing which nothing can be truly accounted mean, or beneath us; if we take  
Christ

Christ for our pattern, his Religion for our rule, and his Rewards for our encouragement.

On the other side it is Pride that puts an irreconcilable difference between the World and Christs Kingdom, *Joh. 1. 2, 16.* For wheresoever it is, and practised, it doth not only debauch the use of all humane Faculties, banish all Moral Vertues, and all Remarks of natural Goodness, but makes the Soul an unfit habitation for every grace of God, of which it naturally destructive. And when that Idol is once set up in the Soul, all the capacities which God God gives us to be instrumental of good, shall all be sacrificed to the self-deity of a vain mind, and made to serve the interests of Envy and Revenge, of Luxury and Ostentation. He therefore that follows not Christ in the example of his humility here below, ought not to pretend to a

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hope

hope of a participation in his exalted Glory in a future state of bliss above.

3. The third instance and step of our Saviours great example in his suffering state, which we are obliged to transcribe and follow, was his eminent Patience. Which because it was a grace to be most especially upon trial in the whole course of his life, and of greatest use in the lives of his Disciples, it is fit we take the greater care to represent it as it was in him, and as it ought to be exemplary to our selves.

Now as this Grace is distinguishable in its practice by the different objects of God and Man, so was his Patience eminent in both respects, to the highest perfection. As it respected God, it was most emphatically manifested, when in the severest passion of his soul, his stupendous Agony; and when he saw be-  
fore



fore him the bitter cup he was to drink, he fully submitted to Gods pleasure, with a *nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*, Mat. 26. 39. Of which *Tertullian* would have no other sense made, but as exemplary of what we should do in our greatest extremities.

Then as his Patience respected men, though he encountered the hardest usages that the Combinations of Power, Malice, and Ingratitude could offer him, in all kinds of sufferings, from all kinds of persons, yet he never expressed the revenge of an hard word; he did neither *ἀντιλογεῖν*, nor *ὑπερεῖν*, recriminate, nor threaten; (the words dependent upon my Text) he made no other returns, but Silence, Forgiveness, Prayers, and Blessing.

And I do not wonder, that when *Justin Martyr* was asked what was Christs greatest Miracle, that he

an-

answered, his Patience : Or that it was *St. Austins* Opinion, that the Justification which the Centurion made of him hanging upon the Cross, *Mat. 27.54. Truly this was the Son of God*, was rather from the wonder of his patience than his power. But as great as it was, it was certainly designed to be made exemplary to us, and exactly to be followed by us, if we intend upon any account to be his Disciples.

O let us then be concernedly careful whatsoever afflictions it shall please God to lay upon us, by whatsoever instruments they are effected, that Patience may have its perfect work upon our souls, not murmuring against God in his severest dispensations : who will (if we would but study his gracious ends, and the happy effects of all afflictions) be always justified in his sayings, (or doings) and clear when he is judged, *Psal. 51.* And

And if the malice and mischief of men be instrumental to the evils we suffer, (as no good man shall want his portion ) let us be sure strictly to answer our Saviours pattern, and his holy Apostles triumphant exemplification of it; who when they they were harrassed with the most violent oppressions that any sort of innocent men ever endured ( as St. Paul expresseth their miseries, *1 Cor. 4.* ) yet all the returns their patient souls contrived, was no more then that, *being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we indure it; being defamed, we entreat, v. 12.*

These, these were the weapons with which the Primitive Christians contended with, and subdued their most powerful adversaries: with which they set up their spiritual Trophies upon the Thrones of Princes, and brought the Kingdoms of the World to be Provincial to  
Christ

Christ's heavenly Empire. Their carriages are the prevailing arguments that command the Worlds acknowledgment, that we belong to God; and that render our souls an easie possession to our selves in the midst of all disturbances. And which is more then all, they shall have a peculiar return of blessing from God, as the holy Apostle expresseth it, (just before my Text, and with a particular aspect upon it) they shall be χάρις καὶ εὐεχία, favour with God, welcom and acceptable to him. Of which *David* was so sensible, that when he was studying some special return for some extraordinary mercies, he did not say (*sacrificabo tauros & altitia*) I will offer some great sacrifice of any commonly-judged signal value, but *calicem salutis*, I will take the cup of salvation, that is, (as many of the Fathers interpret it) the Cup of Affliction; the patient bear-

bearing of which, he judged the most grateful sacrifice to God for all his mercies.

The conclusion is, he that wilfully refuseth to bear the Cross of Christ, in any of these instances of Patience to God or Man, ought not to be so presumptuous as to expect any benefit by the same Cross, to the blessing and salvation of his soul.

4. The fourth part of our Saviours Example in his suffering state, which we must imitate, was his universal design of doing good, which he performed not in any little measures: For, saith St. Peter, *Acts* 10. 38. *He went about doing good.* The *Syriack* reads it, *perlustrans*, looking about; the *Greek*, *διερχόμενος*, going through, and about, to find out all occasions and opportunities of relieving the miseries of the afflicted.

And

And this he did not only in greater and more famous instances, as when *he went about* (as St. Matthew testifies of him, *Matth. 4. 23.*) *healing all manner of diseases, and all kinds of infirmities*; but (as it may be presumed) in the smallest cases and opportunities: witness his first recorded Miracle, when he supplied the want of Wine, though it were but to relieve the modesty, and to salve the repute of a Wedding entertainment.

And though the Divine Story hath recorded little more than the miraculous part of his doing good, yet it appears that he did not then step aside from his universal design, when it is considered that all his Miracles (not like the tricks of *Apollo-nius* and *Mahomet*, which could serve no other ends, but of mirth, cheat, and vain-glory) were all real acts of Mercy and Charity:

the

the particulars of which, were they recorded, (to use *St. Johns* Hyperbole) I suppose the whole World would not contain the Books that would be written.

In this part of our Saviours Example, we must be most especially concerned to follow him; for the harvest of the eternal reward, will at last answer this seed-time, as *S. Paul* allegorisseth, *Gal. 6.*) and in such proportions, *be that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly*; and that *St. Paul* intended by sowing, *doing good*, his inference evinceth, *As therefore we have opportunity, let us do good to all men.*

It is this part of Christianity that must properly fit us for the great account, as our Saviour represents the measures of it, *Matth. 25.* and that shall make the discrimination at the Worlds resurrection, when the τακαταπαιατες, *they that have done*

*done good shall only rise to the life immortal*, Joh. 5. 29. O then, if there be any design for heaven in your minds, of any ray of Grace or Vertue shining in your souls, let it light you to walk in this path of blessing. And let not only all your earthly designs stoop to it, but let all parts of your Religion be governed and conducted by it. Do not think that the Religion of the Ear, Tongue, and Knee, can acquit your purse, and other capacities of doing good, when your disposition for the great reward shall be inquired into.

But what can those men answer to God, when in stead of our Saviours going about doing good, in stead of the Primitive Christians transcription of his excellent Copy in wiping away the tears of Widows, stilling the cries of Orphans, easing the chains of Prisoners, redeeming Captives, dealing bread to the hungry,  
and



and such like acts of doing good, some are running about to make disturbance in Church and State, alienating the minds of innocent people from just submission to legal establishments for Peace and Order? Others are traversing the habitations of Prostitutes, losing their precious hours in Visits, Courtships, and arts of pleasure, which they use (not as alleviations to more serious employments, but) as the important business of their lives.

Now I wish the Christian World would once consider, whether a Confession, Absolution, and a Dirge on the one hand; a Ministers Prayer, a few good words, and a dole, on the other hand, can commute for such neglects, expiate their omissions, and compensate for the rewards of eternity, against Christs example, and his express precepts, the tenour of the threats and promises

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of

of the Gospel to the contrary.

5. The fifth part and step of our Saviours great example which we are to follow, was his universal submission to all the then established Powers and Superiours; that is, both to the Roman Emperours, (to whose Government the Jewish Nation was then Provincial) and to all other remaining permitted Jurisdictions among the *Jews* themselves.

He never attempted either to reproach their Government, or resist their Authority in the least branch appointed for its execution. And thus he behaved himself, when he met all manner of temptations to do the contrary: as first when they universally opposed the great Work and Cause of God, then upon his hand; that is, the greatest Reformation that ever was in the World, the change of the Jewish Religion to the Gospel-dispensation. And then, at

a time the whole Nation (from the then universally observed signs of his near approach) were pregnant with the expectation of a *Messiah*, who they believed should be their temporal Redeemer from the Roman Yoak, and therefore might be presumed to be fitly disposed to comply with any attempt to oppose and controul that Government. Lastly, To compleat the evidence of his unquestionable Loyalty, all this he did when it was in his power to have freed himself and his cause from all their opposition; when he could have commanded Legions of Angels, *Matth. 26. 53.* when he could have convened the hosts of Heaven, and made the Stars in and out of their courses (*& conjurati veniunt ad prælia venti*) to have assisted him. Further, he was so far from any kind of resistance, that he expressed very many positive approbations of their Au-

thorities : as first, When he commanded the Sword, that had smote off the High-priests servants ear, (though drawn by St. *Peter* in his defence) to be put up, with this reflexion ; *all they that take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword*, Matth. 26. 52. that is, that draw and use it against lawful Authority, though abusing its Power, (as the excellent Annotator paraphraseth.) He paid the tribute due to the Temple, (a Custom meerly Judaical) when lest he should offend, a miracle supplied him, *Matth. 17. 27.* And lastly, When upon the view of a piece of money, he declared for the Imperial Power, *Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesars*, Matth. 22. 23.

Now that Loyalty, which our Saviour so unexceptionally practised in his own person, the Apostles and Apostolical Churches after confirmed,

med, both by their precepts and practises. As to their precepts, such as that of *Rom. 13.* and the like, being worn by every Tongue and Pen, I shall not need to urge. But for their Practises (the best Commentaries upon their Doctrines) nothing could be more agreeable to the Pattern and Example of Christ. Witness their carriage before, and in the Ten bloody Persecutions; in the bitterest Storms of which, it could never be said, that any Christian made the least undutiful reflexion upon their Emperours, or their Government: as the great Apologists, *Justin Martyr, Tertulian*, and the rest that lived in those early Ages, do beyond all exception testify. And this innocency they maintained, not only in their greatest incapacities of doing otherwise, but when some of the Heathen Emperours Armies chiefly consi-

sted of them, and had sufficient power to have grappled with them for their indemnities : as *Tertullian* glories, and of which afterward the famous story of the *Theban* Legion was a renowned instance.

And now, who could believe it possible, if there were nothing else to be alledged for the strictest obedience to Authority, but the example of Christ and his immediate followers, there should be found any that bear the name of Christian, that should study and contrive Arguments for the allowance of the Principles and Practices of Disloyalty, as some of our Adversaries on either hand have done, to the disturbance of the Christian World, when the Church of *England* hath always stood an immoveable Rock of Loyalty, between them both. But I shall make no unkind reflexions upon our late miscarriages, of which I believe  
many

many have truly repented, most have been ashamed of, and of which there will be little danger that Posterities should make approbation, unless we can suspect them to be in love with the greatest dishonour, that could be done to Christianity and the severest blow that the Reformed Religion ever received.

O then, let us perswade our selves that we can never walk acceptably to God in a religious course, till we have exactly transcribed our Saviours Copy in all our carriages towards our Governours, of every order. And to do this, not only when we are pleased, but when affairs move most unsuitably to our private judgment or interest: considering, that sometimes Princes are obliged, or pleased to lessen the concerns of some, to ballance their favour to all; which when they do, it is our duty, with all quiet and innocency, to

make the best interpretation, and the tenderest submission.

But those, who can reconcile and promote their professions, with bold disobedience to just Authorities, may as well, and as reasonably hope to go to Heaven with Adultery and Murther upon their souls, for they do equally contradict the Example and Religion of Jesus.

6. The sixth, last, and highest step of our Saviours example, which for great ends we may chuse, and be wisely concerned to follow, was his free and voluntary ingagement; as in the suffering part of it, so in all other religious duties and practices of his life, which he chose to perform and exercise in the greatest heights of perfection.

And in this respect, he so instituted his life, in the whole course of it, as not only by many degrees to exceed the measures of those Laws  
which



which he had constituted, but to act and suffer, in many instances of which he had given no express commandment. As for instance, when he designed to condemn the World, as one part of his holy life, first he did it (as to the riches of it) in such a degree, as to chuse the lowest Poverty, beneath the propriety which the Foxes and Birds of the Air enjoy. Then as to the Honour of it, he not only despised it as a necessary duty; but he renounced it to that degree as to chuse to appear in no higher quality then in the form and reputation of a servant, *Phil. 2.* Lastly, as to the pleasures of it, he so far receded from all innocent satisfactions, as to make himself emphatically a man of sorrows all his life. And when he came to die, he chose more then to die; that is, for the joy that was set before him, he endured the Cross, and despised the shame,

shame, *Heb. 12.* that is, to die with all the aggravations of torment and dishonour.

Now all that I propound as imitable from this part of his example, is not the exact following him in all the degrees of the former duties, nor in all other his chosen acts of greater perfection; as his prodigious Fastings, Pernoctations in Prayer, Agonistick Devotions, and the like; which had they been universally obliging all his Disciples and Professors of his Religion, (though some of them have been fondly imitated by some Orders of the *Roman* Communion, and other fanatick Enthusiasts) would not only have been inconsistent with our humane frailties, and natural frames of Body and Mind, but have indangered the safety of all humane Societies.

All that I intend by it, is that holy persons, who are affected with a  
more

more enflamed love of God, and would express it ; that are transported with a more heightened desire of pleasing God, and are studying how to do it ; that design fuller assurances of Gods love, and aspire at greater degrees of Reward and Glory, and would be informed of the best method to attain them ; I say, such persons should endeavour to improve their engagements to Self-denial, Charity, Piety, and universal Obedience above the lower degrees which the latitude of the Precept may be presumed to allow ; and not to stop in their walking with God in the practice of them, at the *minimum quod sic*, lowest pitch of the absolutely necessary adjudged duty.

For instances ; First, Not to stand at the denial of themselves, in renouncing all that is directly evil, but to change (as often as the case will bear

bear it) the most innocent and allowable freedoms and satisfactions, into severer exercises and religious employments.

Then as to Charity, to study to do more then is absolutely necessary *sub periculo animæ*, that is, beyond what Divines can or ought to declare, as universally obliging: sometimes imitating the *Macedonians* charity to do good, ἐπέσθοντες, *above what they are well able*, 2 Cor. 2. 8. And not only to abjure all occasions that are sinfully expensive (with which no man that hopes for Heaven can in reason acquit himself) but sometimes to part with portions which their order of life usually require, when objects and opportunities of pity call upon them for their help. And this is done especially, when God shall enable men to perpetuate mercy, by settled endowments for the successions of the  
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miserable. Of which, there be three such noble monuments, founded within these few years, by three excellent men of the Episcopal Order, (all very lately gone to their rewards) as are sufficient to out-balance the unworthy opinions of the Age, against that Hierarchy, if it were capable to understand, or love what is truly good.

So in the case of Piety, first particularly that of Prayer; when above the common measures which judicious men may account generally competent, for the observation of the Precept, holy men shall chuse to warm their Devotions at the flames of diviner fires; and think it not enough to be measured by the Repetitions of the *Jews* daily sacrifice, or *Daniels* three addresses; but rather imitate *Dauids* seven times a day, and his midnight office, *Psal.* 119. or the Primitive Christians every

every third hours return, and then chuse to fill up every interval of time from company and employment, with the shorter Offices of private Ejaculations. As for publick Devotions, when they shall think it not enough to make legal compliances, but moreover shall express their love to God, and his publick worship, by a more tender regard to the honour, propriety, and peace of them that minister to his holy Name and Service. And then sparing no cost, not only to uphold, but to advance the Greatness, Splendor, and Beauty of places separated to the service of the great God, and the Eucharistick Offices of his holy Son. And this gives a just title to the pious zeal of Governours, when they shall take care, not only to see the substantial parts of commanded worship, truly performed. But when out of a greater love to God, they shall

shall endeavour to advance the honour and beauty of it with decent rites, and circumstances, that it may appear more comely and reverential.

Now of all these particulars, and other rarer instances of heightened zeal above the ordinary allowed performances of preceptive duties, we have innumerable pregnant Examples, for the encouragement of such as chuse to climb the heights of Religion, with which the Stories of the Ancients abound to amazement; of which these few minutes will not give me leave to make any tolerable enumeration; yet I will endeavour to give you a short view of some few of them, but of such as were in the first, and unsuspected Ages of the Church.

It was this heightened love to God that inflamed the Primitive Christians, not only to die when it was  
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their duty, but for a greater encouragement and confirmation of others in the Holy Faith of Jesus, to offer themselves to the fury of their enemies, and run into the flames of Martyrdom, till they had tired their Persecutors, as *Tiberianus* President of *Palestine* complained to the Emperor. This made the famous *Edyssa* run and complain she should come too late to the Crown of Martyrdom. This Angelick zeal, was the reason why they did not only provide convenient Places, for the Christian Assemblies, but raised up Temples in the days of *Constantine*, to the vastest height, threatening the very Clouds; and with the greatest splendor, *aurro & ebore nitentia*, their roofs shining with Gold and Ivory, as *St. Jerome* witnesseth.

Then the heights of their Charity, were so seraphick and memorable, that *Clemens Romanus* (the first Father)



Father) affirms, that besides their ordinary engagements of relieving the Poor, some of them sold themselves to bondage, to redeem others in greater extremities; and let themselves out to Services, that by their wages, the more impotent might be provided for. *Nazianzen* reports of his Father, that he was wont to part with that in charity which was reserved for necessary uses: and that he had heard his Mother oftentimes wish, that she and her children might be sold, that the price might purchase supply for the wants of the afflicted. To which I may add the famous story of *Paulinus*, who when his money was gone in redeeming Captives, delivered himself to the *Vandals*, to redeem the Widdows son. Who hath not heard of the Empress *Placilla*, who went daily to the Hospitals, to dress the Ulcers with her own hand? And of St. *Je-*

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*romes Fabiola*, a *Roman* Lady that sold all she had, and bought an Hospital, and executed the Offices about the *Lazars* in her own person?

Thus I have given you some few instances, the thousandth part of what might be offered. More of which, who designs to see, may find some of these, and many more, collected lately, by an excellent person giving an account of Primitive Christianity. But if I have offered enough to convince you of the temper of ancient Zeal and Devotion, I have attained my end, why I mentioned them.

And now to obviate that reproach which some may study to throw upon this innocent and noble principle of advanced Piety. First they are to know, that I intend not to give credit to the *Romanists* fond and unallowable excesses, as worshipping  
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of Figures and Images, Praying to Saints and Angels, their ridiculous Pilgrimages, and Pennances, and their such like extravagances; but that this heightened love to God, be expressed onely in rational ingagements, such as are really good in themselves, not contradictory to holy Scripture, and the Analogy of Faith; and that are nearly agreeable, and consequent to the nature and reason of the constituted Precepts. Much less do I advise them as meritorious, or as challenging by their own vertue any thing at Gods hand, to whom (in that sense) *when we have done all we can, we are unprofitable servants.* But least of all as works of supererogation, of which the *Romanists* account is, that they are done as satisfactory not only for their own sins, but abounding to the satisfaction of the sins of others. Neither do I plead for them as uni-

versally necessary ; but as Christ advised once in a matter of like nature, *Matth. 19. he that can receive them, let him receive them.* Or as St. Paul declared his sense , in a particular case of this kind, to be made use of for a general purpose , *He that doth them not, may do well ; but he that doth them shall do better, 1 Cor. 7.*

But I propound them as highly profitable and advantageous for these great purposes.

1. Because such acts of heightened Zeal and eminent Piety, will establish the souls of good men with fuller assurances of the love and favour of God; and will deliver them from the discomfort of a doubtful *medium*, and suspense, between hope and fear, which an ordinary performance of Religious duties, do too often afflict the Spirits of good men living and dying.

2. Because they are such acts , as  
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though for which God hath not made exprefs command, yet with which he will be well pleased, and are secure of his gracious acceptation; as the *Jews* Free-will-offerings were, and as *Dauids* design was, when he had it in his heart to build him an house, for which he gave him no commandment, 1 *King*. 8. 17. And as *Mary Magdalens* act of love was, when she anointed our Saviours feet with precious ointment, for which she had no positive rule or precept.

And if (as once against her chargeable expression of her zeal) it shall be objected against some more noble and costly acts of Piety (as in building or adorning Gods Houses, and the like) that they might have been spared, and the money given to the Poor, I shall only mind them to consider, who it was that said so, and I am superseded from the trou-

ble of giving any further answer.

3. Pious souls should be affectionately desirous to be exercised in such advanced acts of Charity and Piety, from the assurance that God will reward them. For if a Cup of cold Water shall not lose his reward, much more will every act of greater import have its proportioned recompence, for Jesus sake. This was *Placilla's* encouragement when she was reprov'd by the finer Ladies of her Court, for her fore-mentioned acts of Charity, when she answered them (*pro regno hoc ago*) I do them in expectation of a better Crown and Kingdom than my own. And indeed such chosen acts of more eminent goodness, are the proper engagements which God rewards; if we will observe *St. Paul's* reasoning, *1 Cor. 9.* how he expected a greater reward for his ἐκὼν πρῆξις, his voluntary costless preaching the Gospel,

spel, for the noble end of doing more good, then for the necessary commanded duty of preaching it at all.

Fourthly and lastly, From the great advantage which Christianity obtains from the amiable prospect of eminent strictness, and such heightened degrees of Charity and Piety.

O what need have the remiss and Under-Professions of this Age; to be intended and advanced by presidents of such heightened zeal for God and goodness. It is necessary that some men should not only walk in the light of an ordinary Profession, but shine as lights, to warm and melt the hearts of others, who are frozen and fixed against most acts of Charity, and almost all of Piety: and then be able not only to correct all such erroneous zeal, that spends it self in unwarrantable practices of Mistaken Godliness, but put a stop to the Worlds bold defiance against

all that is good. But if Churchmen especially, would assume it as their more proper care, to live and act in those heighths that I have mentioned, (by which they principally, in the purest Ages, obtained the name of *Spiritual Persons*, in opposition to *Secular*; that is, to men that were not ingaged in such advanced Professions of stricter holiness,) I say, if they were more generally so ingaged, (though I am assured no Christian Nation in the World can parallel the number of such as are) it would sooner confute the spight that is against them, wear off the contempt that is upon them, and would be found the most successful expedient to bring dissenters to sober opinions and peaceable conformities.

Thus have I endeavoured to represent to you the measures of Christs great Example in the six several



veral steps we should walk in; which if by the grace of God you shall faithfully endeavour to follow, as you will be out of all danger of miscarriage in your present services, (for I think I need give no other directions) so will you be best prepared to receive the Crown of Immortal Bliss, when Christ shall come to render to every man according to his works at the general Assizes of the World, the great and universal Resurrection. And that Almighty God may afford you and us all his heavenly assistance so to do, let us join in our prayers one for another, in the words which the Church hath taught us in the Collect for the second Sunday after Easter.

*A*lmighty God, who hast given  
 thine only Son, to be unto us both  
 a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample  
 of godly life, give us grace that we  
 may

all that is good. But if Churchmen especially, would assume it as their more proper care, to live and act in those heights that I have mentioned, (by which they principally, in the purest Ages, obtained the name of *Spiritual Persons*, in opposition to *Secular*; that is, to men that were not engaged in such advanced Professions of stricter holiness,) I say, if they were more generally so engaged, (though I am assured no Christian Nation in the World can parallel the number of such as are) it would sooner confute the spight that is against them, wear off the contempt that is upon them, and would be found the most successful expedient to bring dissenters to sober opinions and peaceable conformities.

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 thine only Son, to be unto us both  
 a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample  
 of godly life, give us grace that we  
 may

*may always most thankfully receive  
that his inestimable benefit : and also  
dayly endeavour our selves to follow the  
blessed steps of his most holy life, through  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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THE  
Second Sermon,

Preached at  
BURY St. EDMUND

At the  
Publick Assizes,  
Sept. 13. MDC LXXIII.

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## S E R M. II.

I Joh. 4. 1.

*Believe not every spirit, but try  
the spirits, whether they be  
of God.*

 He same reasons that moved me before to decline all intermedling with your present affairs, prevail with me still in this my second Adventure. I would not seem to reproach these venerable persons, My Lords the Judges, with the least suspicion that they needed my aid to teach them either Skill or Verrue.

And

And as for the inferiour Instruments of Justice in your proceedings, that chiefly need Priestly counsel, whereby right may be done to them that here dearly seek it, I think particular applications to be an expedient too weak and unsufficient to encounter the Ages universal falseness and averſation to all vertue and honesty. These sholes are not to be fished for, and caught to Goodness, by such single hooks of particular directions; they must have a Net spread over them of some more general concern in Religion, which may powerfully influence them with the knowledge of, and obligation to their respective duties.

The last time therefore I attempted them with one of the largest compass, the whole Body of Christianity, practically represented in the example of Christ. I shall now endeavour to encompass them, with  
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one of a lesser circle, (and yet as reasonably promising success) and that is, an ingagement to a more firm adherence in some, and a speedier return in others, to the Communion of the Church of *England*, as being a Church accommodated, more to the designs of the Gospel, as to all morals, and the safety of all Societies, than any Church or Profession in the World.

And as because woful experience hath taught us to date the Peoples declination from the blessed practices of Justice, Honesty, Veneration of an Oath, obedience to Authority, and all other Christian Vertues, (which only necessarily suits the happy managment of such affairs as these) to the late confusions; so to endeavour to bring men back to the same Church whence they were fallen must be believed the most reasonable expedient to recover them

to the same excellent Vertues they lost by departing from it.

It is too pregnantly observed, that ever since the breaking up the Foundations of this excellent Church, we have sunk every day more and more, in all the neglects of our duty to God and Man: we have looked ever since like a People in ill handling, possessed with an Evil Spirit, and bewitched (as Rebellion well resembles it) to our mischief and undoing, and to an universal unthriftiness in the enjoyment of Gods greatest mercies both spiritual and temporal.

O then it is high time to put to our hands for the Churches recovery, and to bring back the People (as fast as we can) to her Communion: that they may learn again to be honest and good, and recover the excellent Genius of the old *English* spirit.

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It is high time that we no more smother our defence, for fear of offending, or to preserve the Mistaken Title of Moderation : Nor meal our mouths so long, till we be choaked against all purposes of after-help; and lest by pretending an over indulgence to men of weak minds, we rock the People asleep in their Schism and Folly, beyond all possibility of being ever awakened. Designing therefore to do something which (besides the respect I had to the present affairs) I judged might be of the more publick and universal concernment in so general an Assembly, I found nothing (as the state of the Church now stands) could answer my purpose so fully, as to endeavour to confirm and fortifie them that yet adhere to the Church of *England*, against all temptations to decline or desert it; and to undeceive all those that already have un-

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happily departed from it. And my Text offers a fair opportunity to attempt both, in which are two parts to be discoursed ;

1. An Inhibition, *Believe not every spirit.*

2. An Exhortation, *But trie the spirits, whether they be of God.*

First, The inhibition ; where it is fit we explicate the terms. The meaning of *Believing*, as to Spirits, offers no difficulty ; though in reference to God and Christ, it hath been perplexed with as many idle and extravagant notions, and to as many ill purposes, as any word in Scripture ever was. But the word *Spirit* will admit some little examination. Originally it signifies the *wind* ; Scripturally and by Analogy, many other things : sometime the Soul of Man in general, and then the several

several faculties in particular : oftentimes it is taken for Angels; and those good and bad : most eminently it is taken for the Deity, and then most distinctly for the third Person of the Trinity ; and particularly for it in its guiding and reaching Office, whether immediately by it self, or mediately by others ; and thus it is here taken really or so pretended. And then the inhibition imports thus much : That Christians should not credulously, and without sufficient trial, follow and be governed by every Teacher that pretends to the Office by a Plea or Commission from the Spirit of God.

Now the Text it self offers two Arguments against such a credulity and aptness of belief. First, because (as the comprehensive indefinite ; *every*, purports) there be many kinds and varieties of Spirits, by which Teachers may be deceived;

and be able to deceive others; and which (how many soever they be) must be all false but one. Thus the Devil (when God permits) turns a teaching Spirit, *I will*, saith he, *be a lying spirit in the mouth of the Prophets*, 1 Chron. 18. 20.

And there is a spirit of perverseness, *Isa. 19. 14. vertiginis*, as *St. Hierome*; *πλανήσεως*, as the *Lxx*; that is (as they render it) a spirit of turning about, or error, which God suffers to be dispersed among a People, as a punishment upon them. *St. Paul* mentioneth, *πνεῦμα ἀνθρώπου*, the spirit of a man; that is, his own fanſie and opinion; which is as various as the ſeveral humours and imaginations of men, 1 Cor. 2. 11. He adds, *πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου*, a spirit of the world, which *St. Augustine* calls the spirit of Pride and Ambition. And this spirit ſets up many a Teacher, and is as various as the different circumstances

stances and humours of Times, to which it must be always garbed and accommodated.

Further, No man ought to wonder at the great variety of Spirits, when he considers what a strange gift of propagation every Evil Spirit hath been observed to have; and how (if it hath had any, the least respite from restraint) it hath presently branched it self into many several Families, and divided apartments of new Spirits. And thus early the Mother-Spirit of Gnosticism (which we find so often reprov'd in the New Testament) did in a short time, become the Parent of such a fruitful Progeny, that from its loyns descended the Spirit of *Valentinians*, *Saturninians*, *Macedonians*, and others, as *Ireneus*, and other Ancients testifie. And St. *Augustine* observed of the Evil Spirit of Donatism, that it procreated so fast, that it be-

gat a very great company of new and disagreeing Parties.

But to go no further then our own experience : No sooner was this glorious Church broken to pieces in our late Rebellion ; no sooner had one common spirit of Opposition (known then but by the *one* name of *Puritanism*) sacrificed the Churches Peace and Unity, Government and Worship to its Rage and Lust ; but it begat Legions , spawned an Offspring of such hideous shapes ; brought forth such Litters of so many deformed stocks of new Spirits , as might make Heresie it self blush to bear their names, and shamed any sort of men in the World into repentance, but one, for being the unhappy Parent of such a monstrous and equivocal issue. And then to consider how far every one of those new Spirits had prevailed over the minds of men , to be deceived by  
 them,



them, I think it were alone enough to arm us with a resolution most carefully to observe the inhibition of my Text.

But that which makes it yet more reasonable and necessary, is because all such spirits (how inconsistent soever they be among themselves) do always contrive, by some pretence or other, to make themselves as like the Spirit of God, as the case can possibly bear, and the Folly and credulity of their Followers admit. For since the Devil can transform himself into an Angel of Light (as *S. Paul* argues, *1 Cor. 13. 14.*) it will be much easier for all other Spirits to make an assimilation.

All which being thus represented, as it must needs put the credulous into a great sense of the danger of being deceived, so it makes their suspension of not believing every spirit, very just and necessary. This the first :

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Secondly,

Secondly, The second Argument from the Text (by the words which do immediately follow it) is, *Believe not every spirit, because many false Prophets are gone out into the world*; that is, because as there be varieties of spirits, to delude the minds of men, so those spirits (while there is Folly, Pride, and Passion in in the World) can never want agents, in every place to execute their unkind offices; and that will be sedulously active, (by gratifying the base humours and designs of some, and by surprizing the weakness and credulity of others) to disturb the Church and mislead the People.

Now there is no man that seriously considers the multitude, subtilty, and unwearied diligence of such Officers of Evil spirits (when they are abroad) but must believe himself to run a very great hazard of  
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being deceived, without the greatest care and strictest enquiry whom to trust.

And that the Church was never without such kinds of men, to offer temptations to the most steadfast, will appear by a very few instances.

What considerate person might not tremble at the thoughts of his danger of being deceived, if he reads but the story of *Core* and his complices : that such persons should ever mask their wicked designs with such a prevailing disguise of Piety as should be able to seduce so many thousands to their destruction. Who would not dread his own instability, and be engaged in the carefullest suspension of mind, whom to trust and follow, when he reads of the *Fews* prodigious defection in the *Samaritan* Schism : or if ever he should meet a parallel temptation to go astray, as they had who were obliged  
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to believe one *Elias*, against 450 Prophets of *Baal* set to deceive him? And if such presidents of danger be not sufficient to chastize and awaken mens credulities, how should our Saviours *Caveat* admonish them? *Beware of false Prophets, Mat. 7.15.* How should the frequent Apostolick predictions of such Seducers advise them, as when it was foretold, *Acts 20. 29.* that *grievous Wolves should enter in, not sparing the Flock?*

Lastly, How should the almost incredible multiplication of such Prophets in every Age, engage them in the severest care, what spirits they should believe, and by what Teachers they should be instructed? *St. Augustine* reckons up 88 several sorts of Hereticks to his time, and *Philastrius* 128, and so proportionably they increased in every following Century. Of all which whosoever desires to see a perfect and yet com-  
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pendious prospect to terrifie him from the danger of seducement through his own credulity, let him but overlook the Churches Tragoedy lately acted in this Nation, and (as in a short Scene) he may see almost all the heresies that ever were before (besides a progeny of new ones) upon the Stage together : and may behold the subtile Professors of them, not only acting over again all the ancient Arts of seduction, but practising new tricks, frauds and pageantries of Piety, to cheat, and deceive the World.

All which put together, makes it very reasonable, that (because many false Prophets are gone out into the World) the inhibition in my Text, *of not believing every Spirit*, should be as strictly and carefully observed, as men would prize and secure their eternal safety. This the second Argument.

And

And now shall common observation of former dangers make us wary whom we believe, or relie upon in our secular affairs ; and shall we be carelessly credulous in matters of spiritual concern ?

Shall Wordly wisdom teach us to trust no body in temporal things, and yet believe every body in matters of eternal moment ? Shall we be more then wise men in the one, and less then fools and babes in the other ?

Can we suspend our faith in things in which sensible demonstration may direct our prudence ? And shall we easily trust, where the Arguments are spiritual, and in the dark, (as to sense) and Evidence at distance, and the danger of miscarrying the greatest that can be ?

O let us be wary where we trust our souls ! And since every spirit is not of God, and our precious souls lie at stake upon a right choice,

let

let us (and there never was a time in which it was more needful) take all possible care, and use all our faculties and skill, to try which are truly of God. And that leads me to the second part of my Text, the Exhortation, *But try the spirits.*

2. The duty is, δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα, *to try*: where we are first to observe (as an encouragement to undertake it) that God hath so delivered the things of our Peace in Scripture, as we are Creatures of Reason, Choice, and Judgment: and therefore he was pleased that much in Religion should depend upon the exercise of our Reason by trial and examination. For so it is, as to the matter and general substance of our happiness, we are obliged (δοκιμάζετε τὰ διαφύεργα, *Phil. I. 12.*) to try and search for the things that are excellent: but there is no case wherein we are more concerned than in this,

this, *the trial of spirits; the guides of souls*; upon whose Offices and Gods Ordinances in their hands, depends the Peace and Unity of the Church, and the great event of every mans particular salvation.

Now that which makes this duty very reasonable, is, that as God was pleased there should in natural things be differential marks, and incommunicable characters to guide mans understanding in distinguishing one being from another; so much more in spirituals, (where the concern is greater) we cannot suspect that God should impose a duty to *try* and *chuse*, and leave us without sufficient means to discriminate and distinguish.

Not ought we to doubt it in this instant case in hand, that since God hath put it upon our Trial and Choice what Guides we are to follow, what spirits to trust too, that



he hath also allowed us some differing notes and characters, how to understand the spirits that are of God, from those that are not.

For the finding out of which at this needful time (in which there appears so many different pretenders to conduct Religion and the souls of men) is the business of this hour. And that I may be sure not to miscarry in this great trial, I shall first lay down the characters which false spirits or Teachers, may have in common with those that are of God, and then describe those that do really evince the difference.

1. The first Character in common, and undistinctive, is a natural aptitude, or a well acquired ability to *Teach*: Though they be improved to a more then ordinary dexterity of the most gratifying and zealous utterance, in Praying and Preaching. Therefore *St. Paul*, when he

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commanded the *Romans* to mark them that make Divisions, renders them not distinguishable by their words and manner of speaking; for saith he, they shall (διὰ τῆς χρῆσεως καὶ εὐλογίας, *Rom.* 16. 18. ) by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. And when *St. Peter* forewarns them of false Prophets he tells them they shall come with the speaking character, *πλεονεξίας λόγους*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 3. *with feigned words*; that is, framed and fashioned, perhaps to the highest strains of Piety. But if those Teachers seem to be over-studious to exceed others in more pleasing and melting modes of speaking, and to habituate themselves to extraordinary winning and humouring expressions, (though what they say be good) yet they may justly give occasion to wise observers to collect some reasons to suspect their truth and sincerity.

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Therefore St. *Jerome* observed in his time, *affabilis sermo & blandum eloquium, &c. sunt hereticorum laquei, quibus pisces capiunt & volucres*, an attable way of discourling, and a flattering delivery, were the snares of Hereticks, by which they catched the little People into their affections, and opinions. But if instead of the true Spirits modest endeavour to found the Peoples souls in the common Articles of the Christian Faith, they shall chuse to fly aloft, like St. *Judes* empty Clouds, at higher doctrines, as they call them. As when they turn the Gospel into a Mystery, of which they themselves must pretend to be the only men that carry the Keys to open it; and, if instead of instructing the People in their obligations to obey Christs commandments, and soberly directing them in all parts of holy life, as Justice, Mercie, Obedience to

Authority, and the like (which they teach the poor people to undervalue as legal preaching) they be venturing at the seals of the Revelation, numbring of heads, and horns, and beasts, controuling Governments, and disputing Laws; or shall be trowing up to the lofty Nothings of empty Metaphors, extravagant Notions and Phrases; or be continually trading with *St. Jude's* ὑπερφύλα, great swelling words of Priviledges, Saintships, Liberties, Divine Unions, and the like; or be always at a thousand repetitions of the name of Christ, getting him, laying hold on him, clotting with him, and the like; though they do all this with the greatest earnestness, zeal, and sweat imaginable, they grow beyond suspicion their design is not good.

The sum is, To be able to pray and preach with the best skill and capacity, is no distinguishing mark;

for

for men may have those faculties and yet nevertheless be spirits, Teachers that are not of God.

2. Nor secondly can a pretence to a claim, for their doctrines from the holy Scriptures, be a sufficient mark of distinction ; for as much as no Ancient or Modern Heretick, but did, and do cry up an interest in Gods Word, to support, or at least to seem to palliate their plea and doctrines. And this is pregnantly to be taken notice of through the whole stock of Ecclesiastick Records. *Tertullian* very early observed in his famous Book, *De præscriptionibus Hæreticorum*, that *Suadere non possunt de rebus fidei, nisi de literis fidei, scripturas obtendunt, & hac sua audacia quosdam movent*, it had not been possible to have removed some from the truth, had they not been prevailed with by the sacred name of Scripture. How much would this hour be too little

for such heaps of observations of this kind, as might be collected.

Now all the advantage which all false spirits do make by pretending Scriptures, is because God hath so delivered his truths in them, many of which are so wrapt up in Metaphors, and other Tropes, and Figures, so immixt with occasional discourses, and very often so obscurely delivered (or as *St. Paul* expresseth it, *ὡς ἐν αἰνίγματι*, so darkly, and as it were in a riddle) that they that have designs to deceive others, that want humility to hear the sense of the Church, and to obey their lawful Guides appointed to instruct them in their right interpretation, may find Arguments semblable enough in Scripture, to serve the ends of a Deceiver, to satisfy a private and prejudicate spirit in any error in the world, wresting them (as *St. Peter* adviseth us) to their own destruction. Hence

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it is that Hereticks of the greatest inconsistency among themselves, and some of them in perfect contradiction one to another, have laid their Plea upon the holy Scriptures. So *Vincentius* observes of the Hereticks before his time, and instanceth in *Photinus*, *Novatianus*, *Sabellius*, *Donatus*, and many others. And we our selves in our days have seen the same effect. To instance, How have the *Socinians* found in Scripture, a seeming authority to assert their denial of Christs Divinity; and yet the *Romanist* can think he thence finds proof enough, that a Priest in a Wafer may make him the mighty God, and worship him accordingly? How have the contending Armies of the Remonstrants and *Contra-Remonstrants*, (whose principles stand at the Poles distance one from another) managed their long War, with the same weapon of holy Scripture?

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And how from thence have the three great parties among us, perswaded themselves that each of them can in Scripture trace the measures of their several Church-governments? And (which is most to be admired) how have the unwarrantable practices of Rebellion, Murder, and confounding all that's sacred, been so far patronized from Scripture, as to engage multitudes to believe them to be the prosecutions of Gods cause, and instances of his most acceptable service? Hath not experience taught us, that such a distant Text, as, *Down with it, down with it, even to the ground*, hath prevailed more to destroy the places of Publick Worship, then that, *This House shall be called a House of Prayer*, could perswade men to keep them up; that a *binding Kings in chains*, have tempted men to the most execrable destruction of their natural Princes; when

when, *they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation*, could not satisfy their Consciences to preserve them. And have we not heard, that a *Curse ye Meroz*, could justify all the Ravages committed upon the Loyal and the Innocent? To be short, the sum is, A bare appeal and claim to Scripture, is not an incommunicable mark, but that nevertheless, the spirit that doth it may not be of God.

3. Thirdly and lastly, A plausible and fair life and conversation doth not distinguish; for as much as the greatest enemies of truth in all Ages, have been noted for a greater pretext of framed sanctimony, and formed piety, outward innocency and humility, or so much of these as might serve to advance a reputation to their Plea, and Doctrines. But this is the sheeps cloathing of false Prophets, *Mat. 7. 14.* and the transformation of false Apostles into the likeness of

the Apostles of Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 13. And it is that which St. Paul calls, *μορφωὴ τῆς εὐσεβείας*, 2 Tim. 3. 5. the form or appearance of godliness. S. Austin relates, that the great temperance and devotion of the *Manachees*, betrayed himself and *Alipius* into the gross heresie of *Manachism*. And S. Basil affirms of the *Arians*, that *ob confictam sanctimoniam omnia credita habuere*, they surprized an universal belief of their heresie by their contrived and fashioned Piety. Which gave occasion to St. Bernard to affirm and observe, that *hæresis docta est non tantum lingua, sed vita mentiri*, Heresie was as well skilled to dissemble for its acceptance, with the cheat of life, as with the deceit of the tongue.

Now the design of all this artificial zeal and piety, is to check the unavoidable imperfections of the true Guides of souls-carthen-vessels,  
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and to raise a reputation to themselves from their disgrace, which they are always studying to improve before the People.

But though the false spirits greater seeming piety may allure men of weak minds, who understand not the cheat, and justify their errors, with such whose pride and interest tempt them to a compliance with them; yet the wise and innocent will easily suspect, that under the disguises of a more than ordinary scenical Piety, most commonly there lies hid, some spiritual wickedness, some close and undiscovered sin. We know that *Jehu* was a zealous Reformer; and *John* of *Leyden* was no inconsiderable Religionist, Earl *Gowry* was no small Professor; and the Authors of our late troubles were not to be reckoned among the crowds of the Prophane

phane, because most of them were great hearers, and had notable gifts of Prayer; yet what impieties were lodged under their smooth professions, we shall now not willingly recount.

Again, I would have it further considered, (because this Plea goes a great way with the multitude) that it is one thing to live intirely to the precepts of Christ, and by the just laws of Government; and another thing, to live up to the humours and modes of a party, that distinguish themselves from others by a manner of speaking, peculiar phrases, looks and garbs, by oppositions and scruples, rather than by an observed stricter justice, nobler degrees of mercy, tenderer loyalty, and other such like graces of Christianity, which gives the onely true reason of being denominated Godly,

ly; and without which, the appellation is presumptuously assumed, and unwarrantably given. But let them be as good as their profelytes can fame them, nay suppose them to be good (if possible) without just exception, yet is it no incommunicable character of distinction, or mark of office; but nevertheless they that have it, may yet be spirits that are not of God.

Thus I have endeavoured to describe the qualifications that hold in common with the false spirits, and the spirits that are of God; and though they are all required in the true spirits and teachers that are of God, to make them capable subjects of the distinguishing characters, yet are not incommunicable marks of a particular mission of God to the holy Calling.

We acknowledge and profess that  
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the true Guides of souls should be really qualified in all those three that I have mentioned.

1. They should, διδασκτικοί, *1 Tim.* 3. 2. be fit and able to teach others, competently skilled in the present learned Languages of the Christian World, if not in the Original Tongues; that by such aids of knowledge, their minds may be furnished with a convenient (at least) stock of Learning, and their tongues fitted to express themselves decently and significantly.

2. They should be principally skilled in the holy Scriptures, that as all truth is either expressly or virtually contained in them, so they may be able readily to appeal to them, preach and apply them to the good of souls.

3. They should be as St. Paul adviseth, ἀνέγκλητοι, *Tit. 1. 6.* ἀνεπίληπτοι



ἀνῆτοι, 1 Tim. 3. 4. *blameless, and without just cause of accusation.* And this was typified in the *Aaronical Priesthood*, when none that had a blemish should come near to offer the offerings of the Lord, *Levit. 21. 21.* And therefore the true spirits of God should rather, *vitia morum quam verborum vitare; potior enim est bene vivendi quam bene loquendi facultas*, avoid ill living then ill speaking, for a good life is the powerfullest and most prevalent instruction.

Now though they should be thus qualified, yet over and besides these, they must be characteristically separated to their Ministerial Offices, by some marks and testimonials that declare a mission from God; without which they that shall presume to execute such offices, or any part of them, are guilty of a great presumption

sumption in themselves ; *No man taketh this honour to him unless he be called of God as was Aaron*, Heb. 5. 4. and all their administrations , ought to be judged invalid to others ; for how can they preach , much more perform any other Priestly Office, with blessing and success, unless they be sent , *Rom. 10. 15.* Which separation and mission must be made demonstrable , by some signal mark and character , which may be a proof , *quoad nos* , to us, that they are so separated and sent of God ; otherwise how should any man be capable of performing this duty of Trial, or be assured at any time of receiving any blessing by any ministerial Offices, for their souls good.

The signal Characters of Christ and his Apostles separation to their Ministerial Offices, were Miracles ; without which it had been a ridiculous

culous Plea to have told the World (from any thing in themselves ) that they were sent of God : which Christ acknowledgeth , *If I bear witness of my self* ( if I make my own testimonial ) *my witness is not true* ; that is , it is not competent, nor rational.

But when Gods time was come, that Miracles should cease, he also shut that door by which his Ministers first entered into the Church, and hath been since pleased that there should be no other separation, but by a mediate and ordinary calling ; which must be , *sub aliquo signo sensibili ut nota sit Ecclesia* , under some sensible signs , or marks, that they may be known to the Church, and distinguished by them.

Now the sensible signal Characters and Testimonials, by which the Church knows the spirits that are  
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of God, from those that are not, are these three in concurrence together.

1. The first is (with and besides all those former qualifications) to have received imposition of Apostolical or Episcopal hands, as a visible designation of lawful separation. And of this practice the Scripture (which makes it of Divine Institution) gives an infallible evidence, in the times they bear date. Thus the Holy Ghost separated *Barnabas* and *Saul*, *Acts* 13. 2. and after fasting and prayer, it was signally declared by *laying on of hands*, v. 3. Such a Character had *Timothy* and *Titus*, (as the Epistles to them shew) and the same to communicate to them that should follow in their respective charges, *Tit.* 1. 5. And the continuation of  
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that primitive practice of it, was so pregnant and universal, that *Calvin* himself could not but say, that *illa tam accurata observatio præcepti vice nobis esse debet*, the accurate observation of it could not amount to a less obligation then that of a precept. He therefore that should presume to teach, admit, or conduct Assemblies, and that hath neither Miracles, as Christ and his Apostles, nor imposition of hands (as the Church hath always practised, as in the first so in all following Ages) to evidence his Commission, is a spirit not of God, whatsoever excellencies of qualification, may otherwise be pretended; and they that are guided by him and have not considered it to trial, follow him in sin, if they understand it, in great wickedness.

Now the contrary mark of false

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Prophets, is declared by our Saviour, *ἔρχονται πρὸς ὑμᾶς*, *Mat. 7.* *they come to you in sheeps cloathing:* they come, come voluntarily, and are not sent.

And *St. Paul, Act. 20. 29.* characterizeth them with an *εἰσελεύσονται*, *enter in;* Grievous Wolves shall enter in, that is voluntarily assume the Office, not called, sent, or placed by order or commission. Such are not *ἀφθερισμένοι*, separated by God in the Order of the Church, *Rom. 1.* but *ἀποδιορίζοντες*, *Jude 19.* such as separate themselves by their own presumption and intrusion. Such as these we are not to trust to, as being spirits that are not of God.

2. The next means of enquiry, is to understand by whom such imposition of hands have been made  
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and executed; and then the mark of the true spirits of God is to be separated and ordained to their Offices by such persons, who by a continued chain, or line of succession, can securely derive their Commission from the person of Christ. From whom, as from our common Parent, there is an holy seed under the new Covenant; though not annexed to a Family, as that of *Aaron*, yet to an holy Calling, for a perpetual spiritual propagation. Now the end of this Chain is in the hand of God, who sent Christ, who sent his Apostles; *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you, Joh. 20. 21.* The Apostles to maintain that succession, did in their respective charges, appoint and ordain successors, with engagement that they should still propagate the Office of the Gospels holy Priesthood;

hood; as it appears by *St. Paul's* order to *Titus*, *I have left thee at Crete, to ordain Elders in every City*, Tit. 1. 5. Hence it is that our Saviour tells his Apostles, *Lo I am with you to the end of the world*, Matth. 28. that is, not with them onely in their persons, but in their successors also, who should proceed directly from their spiritual loyns. And for this reason it is that the Ancients (unbiaſſed Judges in this Enquiry) have taken ſuch care, and were obſerved to be ſo curious in Marſhalling the ſucceſſions of the Biſhops of the principal ſeats of Chriſtianity: for which *Epiphanius* gives this reaſon, (after he had exactly recorded the very names of the ſeveral ſucceſſions,) Let no man wonder that we ſo carefully recite ſuch things and names, for (*per hæc enim ſem-*  
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*per claritas ostenditur*, they are an evidence of the truth of our holy Calling, and consequently of the Church it self.

Now as to the present Church of *England*, we have had this blessing from God, that both for the earliness and uninterrupted of the line of our successions, no Church in the Christian World, can pretend to a better evidence; and that *Rome* it self (after all her insultations) must be content with one much more perplext, and doubtful, as might easily be made appear. And I am morally assured of this comfort, that there is no Bishop, nor Priest of the Church of *England*, but may and ought to believe his spiritual pedigree, as truly derived from the Person of Jesus, (the first Bishop and Priest of the Gospel) as any Prince, can make his title to

his Crown, or any Noble man to his honour and inheritance by a succession from Ancestors of far shorter Antiquity and continuance. But of this honour and blessing, the two Millstones (as the great Archbishop calls them) our Enemies on either hand have endeavoured to deprive us. First, The *Romanists* would fain blend our succession, by the vain Fable of the Nags-head-Ordination. But *Mason* and incomparable *Bramhall* have so perfectly baffled that idle and groundless story, that their late more learned Controversers have wholly laid it aside, and so needs not the trouble of a particular Confutation. On the other hand, our Fanaticks do chuse to question and decry it, because the line ran through the time in which *Romish* superstition prevailed.

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arise, as without mission, so without succession or propagation, by which the Churches lawful Pastors lineally descend. They arise as the smok ascends, that darkens the Sun and the Air, *Rev. 9. 2.* or like the Beast, (armed for mischief) with heads and horns, *Rev. 13. 1.* or like the Tares of the field, which the husbandman never sowed; that is, they shall climb unto their Offices, by the steps of Ambition, or are raised up to them by popular favour and voice of tumultuous Assemblies, who commonly (if permitted, as *St. Paul* observes) love to heap to themselves their own Teachers, *2 Tim. 4. 3.* whom they keep and govern, and by whom they may always be uncontrollably humoured, and observed. But let them be made by whom they please, they are not constituted by

by Gods order, and so not of God.

3. The third and last Character, in concurrence with the former, to direct our trial of spirits is, that such spirits are then demonstrably of God, who teach and maintain the doctrines of God. Men may be false Prophets by false Doctrines, as well as by false Callings. And the *Arian* Priests were such by their heretical principles, as well as the *Arian* Presbyters by their unlawful Ordinations. But because the whole circle of the differing parties (from the *Romanist* to the *Quaker*) do all make claim, and center in this pretence, that their several doctrines are of God; and lest we should seem barely to presume and assert our own, to be so, (as most of Adversaries use to do) and not  
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sufficiently demonstrate that they are so: Therefore it is just and necessary that we endeavour to find out such marks that may signally distinguish the doctrines that be of God from those that are not, and then see how farr the doctrines of the Church of *England* stand in agreement with them.

I. First then, Those are the doctrines that are of God, which (as to the fundamentals of Faith) are either expressly declared, or evidently deduced from the holy Scriptures, and none to be believed as such, but those that are so. And as to the super-fundamental Articles of Doctrine, contrived for the common peace and order of particular Churches, (such as are our 39 Articles, and as the Confessions of other Churches ought to be

be so accounted) if they be not refutable by the Scriptures, and the analogy of Faith, nor be contrariant to right reason, ought also to be reputed the Doctrines of God.

2. But then secondly, Because God was pleased so to deliver his truths in Scripture, (for reasons before mentioned, to which many more might be added) with some obscurity, (though not so much so by it self, as made so by the moral infirmities of mens understandings) therefore Christ did provide and immediately send another guide, (which the Apostles themselves did seem to stand in need of, though they were blest with Christs personal instructions) and that was the Holy Ghost, which he promised should guide them in-

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to all truth, *Joh. 16. 13.* And lest it should seem to have concerned the Apostles onely in their time, it was also promised to abide with them for ever, *Joh. 14. 16.* that is, for the benefit of their successors and the whole Church to the end of the World. Therefore whosoever would afterward understand the doctrines which were of God, was obliged not onely to be governed by his own private reading the Scriptures, and judgment upon them, but also to enquire for, and to submit to the conduct of Gods Spirit wheresoever it was to be found. Now this is principally to be understood, as to cases in controversie, and to difficult places: but as to the fundamentals of the common Faith, and rules of Holy Life, as they are plainly set down in Scripture, and easily disco-



discoverable to every honest mind, so every man ought to be encouraged to a constant reading of them, for the confirmation of his Faith, and government of his Life.

3. Therefore thirdly and lastly, Our next enquiry is, to understand where those promises were or are fulfilled, and where the guiding Office of the Holy Ghost was, or is, executed and performed; that men may attend to it, and be guided by it in all cases of different persuasions and professions, that they may know which are of God.

The *Romanists* would engross it to the Churches of their Communion only, and that by as an infallible a conduct, as the Apostles enjoyed it. But because this pretence hath been so lately examined, and sufficiently baffled, I shall only enquire

enquire how some Popes themselves should be recorded to have been notorious Hereticks; as particularly *Liberius* and *Honorius*; and then, how he that relies on that pretence, can reasonably think himself secure.

The Fanaticks on the other side, (if as to us they may be thought altogether to be of two sides) lay claim to it, by an especial particular light given to them of God, or (as the soberer sort of them) by a private sufficient assistance from God, in the use of the best means they can, for the understanding the Scriptures. But there needs no other confutation of this pretence, but their certain disappointment, that have trusted to it, made evident by their own unconstancy of opining, and the perpetual disagreements of those that have made that claim.

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There is but one more that I know of, was ever pretended to; and indeed, then which, I cannot imagine any other that can with any shew of reason, be offered in satisfaction to this Enquiry, and that is the Holy Ghosts guidance of the universal Church in all Ages and places, to be observed in those doctrines and interpretations of Scripture, (according to the famous rule of *Vincentius Lirinensis*,) which claim to Primitive Antiquity, universal Profession and Consent: (*Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus, hoc vere proprieque catholicum, cap. 30.*) So that the sum of this Enquiry is, that those are the doctrines of Christ and his Apostles, which have been received as such in the first and purest Ages, and that have continued to be acknowledged as such, by the most universal

versal Consent and Profession.

Against the absoluteness, and unexceptionable exactness of this rule of *Vincentius*; whatsoever may be alledged or granted, it must for ever stand uncontrolled, till any other rule can be produced or imagined, (which I think no man hath pretended to attempt) that may in any degree demonstrate the promises of the Holy Spirit guiding into all truth.

Now this is the Glory of the Church of *England*, and which hath made her the envy of all her dissenting Neighbours round about her, that in all her Doctrines, Government and Worship, she alone can offer her self to this most reasonable and ancient Rule to be tried and judged, to which no other Church in the World dare pretend to submit. Therefore it is that all  
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those doctrines wherein we differ from the Church of *Rome* cannot be from the conduct of Gods Spirit, and so not the doctrines of the Spirits that are of God, because they want the first part of *Vincentius* his rule, that is, succession from primitive antiquity. And therefore the great Archbishop offered this challenge, *p. 382.* That if any Jesuite can prove, that by a visible continued succession to this day, either Transubstantiation in the Eucharist, the Eucharist in one kind, or Purgatory, or Worship of Images, or Prayers in an unknown Tongue, with divers other points, have been so taught, I, for my part will yield the cause. As to the private opinions of some ancient Fathers (as those of *Tertul.* *Orig.* *St. Austin*, and others) though they had antiquity, yet they wanted universal consent, and so were

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maintained against that part of the evidence of being the Doctrines of God.

And then as to the new opinions of these times so strongly contended for by our present dissenters, (such as concern their new models of Government, manner of Worship, and several opinions (as they stand in opposition to the present established Church of *England*) could not be from Christ and his Apostles, and they that teach them, nor the spirits that are of God, because they want all the marks of Gods Spirit, as having neither primitive Antiquity, nor universal Consent, Profession or Practice; and we challenge them to shew it if they have any: which if they do, I shall willingly sacrifice all that I have said against them, to shame and Recantation.

All the Arguments that I know  
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they have to tempt them from their conformity to this excellent Church, is either ignorance, because they understand it not; or perverseness of humour, and discontentedness of mind, which in some men must for ever be gratified by opposition; or else an habitual dislike which they call *tender Conscience*, which we may then believe to be sincerely pretended, when we see the same tenderness expressed in the most considerable practices of Christianity and Holy Life, as Justice, Mercy, Obedience to Authority, and the like; as well as in the declining a poor innocent Ceremony, or formation of substantial Worship, nowhere forbidden by God, and commanded by the just Laws of men. This is the third and last mark and Character of the Spirits that are of God, to whose conduct we may en-

trust our souls, and that is such as teach the Doctrines that are of God.

And now you see (by the transient applications that I have made, and the clear evidence of the matter it self) upon what a sure foundation the present constituted Church of *England* stands, above any Profession of Christianity in the World. As to my endeavour of offering all the marks of a true Church and its Ministry, I thank God I can testify to him that I have with-held no evidence that I know of, that may discover the truth, nor offered any thing in my applications of them, to our own, which my soul hath not as faithfully dictated, as my Tongue expressed.

Time gives me not leave to offer any further applications; onely I desire and pray to God, that those that yet truly adhere to this Church,  
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may (by what I have said) find reason to love and honour it, and the true Spirits of God within it more and more : and that those that are departed from it, may timely and seriously consider upon what slender evidence they have done it, and may speed their return to it, as to a Church that hath all the marks of God, and Characters of truth upon it. And I hope there be many amongst us that have so much compassion for them, as to be willing, ( if God Almighty should grant it as a condition of so great a mercy ) to be something that may resemble *St. Pauls* noble Charity, ( when he wished himself accursed ; that is, at least, to be deprived of the happiness of an outward Profession of Christianity, to bring the *Romans* to it, *Rom. 9. 3.* that such our dissenters

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ters were returned in mind and practice, to serve God with us, with one heart and mouth. Which God grant for Jesus sake.

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